

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2740

CARACAS FOR ROBERT PASTOR, NSC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PINS, DR
SUBJECT: PANIC IN REFORMISTA RANKS

REF SANTO DOMINGO 2736

1. THE DISMAY THAT BEGAN SETTLING OVER REFORMISTA CIRCLES IN THE WAKE OF PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S MAY 18 SPEECH IS NOW MANIFESTING ITSELF IN MANY WAYS. THESE INCLUDE CONTINUED SCATTERED ARRESTS OF PRD MILITANTS AND SYMPATHIZERS IN THE INTERIOR DESPITE URGENT MEDIA CALLS FOR A HALT TO SUCH ACTIVITY. BUT NOWHERE IS THE DESPERATION MORE EVIDENT THAN IN THE NATIONAL PALACE, WHERE PRESIDENT BALGUER'S OLDEST AND MOST TRUSTED CONFIDANTS FACE THE LOSS OF THE GREAT POWER THEY HAVE WIELDED WITH SUCH AUTHORITY OVER THE PAST DOZEN YEARS.

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2. THE MOST OBVIOUS SIGNS ARE SEEN IN IN THE USE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL RADIO-TV NETWORKS AND PRIVATE RADIO NETWORKS OWNED BY BALAGUERISTA BUSINESSMEN/POLITICIANS (REFTEL). LAST NIGHT AND TODAY, TALK SHOWS ON THESE NETWORKS WERE POURING OUT A VARIETY OF PRO-GOVERNMENT THEMES THAT CENTER ON (A) PRD VOTE FRAUD, (B) THE UNACCEPTABILITY OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION, AND (C) THE COMMUNIST THREAT. THE PROGRAMMING IS OF POOR TECHNICAL QUALITY,

OFTEN WITH COMICAL PRODUCTION ARRANGEMENTS, AND THE CONTENT IS TRANSPARENTLY REFORMISTA PROPAGANDA. (OTHER EFFORTS ARE JUST HASTILY IMPROVISED AND EVEN CRUDER. EARLIER THIS AFTERNOON, A PRIVATE AIRPLANE FLEW OVER EMBASSY GROUNDS SCATTERING LEAFLETS WHICH SAY "FUERA LA INTERVENTION EXTRANJERA EN LOS ASUNTOS INTERNO (SIC) DE NUESTRO PAIS." THESE ARE SIGNED JUVENTUD REVOLUCIONARIA NACIONALISTA, AN ORGANIZATION WE HAVE NEVER HEARD OF.)

3. THE TENOR OF THE ELECTRONIC PROPAGANDA ON RADIO AND TV IS BEST HEARD ON THE GOVERNMENT'S RTVD, WHICH ON FRIDAY BEGAN SHOWING "PANELS" OF EXPERTS IN PRIME TIME HOW THE PRD ORGANIZED THE COUNTRY-WIDE FRAUD THAT REFORMISTAS ALLEGE. PROFESSIONAL ANTI-COMMUNIST RAFAEL BONILLA AYBAR LED LAST NIGHT DISCUSSION WITH THIS THEME: ELECTORAL FRAUD IS ENDEMIC IN LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAS AND AS IS WELL-KNOWN, SUCH FRAUDS ARE ALWAYS RIGGED BY SITTING GOVERNMENTS. NOW, HOWEVER, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, AN OPPOSITION HAS ORGANIZED A MASSIVE FRAUD TO TRY TO STEAL AN ELECTION. BONILLA GOES ON TO EXPLAIN THE THESIS BUT HE IS NOT ENTIRELY COMPREHENSIBLE. ONLY SKETCHY AND CONFUSING CLAIMS ARE OFFERED AS EVIDENCE, AND THE DISCUSSION VEERS INTO DENUNCIATIONS OF INTERVENTIONISM, THE DANGERS OF COMMUNISM INHERENT IN ANY CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT AT THE PRESENT TIME, AND THE WICKEDNESS OF THE PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE PARTY (WHICH HAS ALSO INTERVENED).

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4. ONE PANLIEST, AN "INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST," REFERS TO PRESIDENT CATER AT LEAST TWICE AS A "USEFUL FOOL" WHO IS BEING EXPLOITED BY THE PRD. BONILLA'S HISTRIONICS ARE DIRECTED AT THOSE MISGUIDED BUSINESS AND SOCIAL LEADERS WHO WERE INDUCED TO SIGN ALL THOSE PAID ADS PLEADING WITH PRESIDENT BALAGUER TO LET THE ELECTORAL PROCESS FREELY RUN ITS COURSE. THESE ARE THE VERY PEOPLE, HE WANRS, WHO WILL BE "LIQUIDATED" ONCE THE OPPOSITION COMES TO POWER. HE FINDS MANY SIMILARITIES IN THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THAT IN CUBA WHEN CASTRO TOOK OVER AND PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE WERE IMMEDIATELY IT BEFORE FIRING SQUADS.

5. THAT IS THE HEAVY MATERIAL. TODAY ON THE SUNDAY TALK SHOWS, MORE RESPECTABLE PEOPLE BEGAN TO APPEAR. VINICIO MARINO CASTILLO, LONG-TIME FRIEND AND ADVISER TO BALAGUER OF WHOM VERY LITTLE WAS SEEN DURING THE LATE CAMPAIGN, WAS THE GUEST ON TV'S MOST WIDELY WATCHED POLITICAL PROGRAM, "YOU BE THE JUDGE." CASTILLO'S LINE WAS MUCH MORE SUBTLE BUT JUST AS HARD TO CREDIT; HERE WAS A POLITICAL SAGE WHO IS SAID TO BE A GOOD LAWYER ARGUING FOR "EXCEPTIONAL ELECTIONS" THAT WILL ALLOW THOSE DID NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO VOTE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY. "VINCHO" SUGGESTED THAT TECHNICAL TRICKERY BY VENEZUELAN EXPERTS WAS USED TO ELIMINATE REFORMISTAS FROM THE COMPUTERIZED VOTE LISTS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

THESE ELECTORS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO VOTE HE MAINTAINED.
THERE IS NOTHING IN THE ELECTORAL LAW PROVIDING FOR SUCH "EXCEPTIONAL
"
ELECTIONS; PRESUMABLY THE LAW COULD BE AMENDED QUICKLY BUT
HE DIDN'T SEEM TO B E ARGUING FOR THAT. HIS POINT WAS QUITE
VAGUE.

COMMENT. WE EXPECT THIS SORT OF PROPAGANDA, WHOSE ESSENTIAL
POINT SEEMS TO BE THAT SOME WAY MUST BE FOUND TO KEEP BALAGUER IN
OFFICE AFTE AUGUST 16, TO CONTINUE UNTIL THE JCE DECIDES THE
WINNER OF THE MAY 16 ELECTION, PRESUMABLY SOME TIME THIS WEEK.
WHETHER IT IS HAVING ANY IMPACT IS DOUBTFUL, OWING TO THE
LACK OF ANY COHERENT PROGRAM TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE ITS AUTHORS
SEEK. THE MILITARY, THE ONLY FORCE CAPABLE OF IMPOSING A SOLUTION
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DIFFERENT FROM THAT WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY THE
ELECTORATE, IS SIDELINED FOR THE MOMENT. THE OFFICER COPRS IS BLUE
BUT RESIGNED TO THE PROBABILITY IT HAS NO ALTERNATIVE EXCEPT TO
AWAIT THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRD IN THE NATIONAL PALACE. AND FINALLY,
THIS FRENETIC POST-ELECTION ACTIVITY SEEMS TO HAVE LOST SIGHT OF A
SINGLE, UNAVOIDABLE FACT: THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF, IN WHAT IS NOW
GENERALLY REGARDED AS HIS SWAN SONG AS HE GOES TO GLORY,
CONCLUDED THAT ORATION BY SAYING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, DESPITE
IRREGULARITIES, WAS CLEAN.
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